

**CITY OF ROCKLIN
MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

**April 20, 2010
Rocklin Council Chambers
Rocklin Administration Building
3970 Rocklin Road
(www.rocklin.ca.us)**

- 1. Meeting Called to Order at 6:30 p.m.**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance was lead by Commissioner Sully.**
- 3. Roll Call**

Commissioner Sully, Chairperson
Commissioner McKenzie, Vice Chairman – Absent with Cause
Commissioner Coleman
Commissioner Menth
Commissioner Shirhall

Others Present:

Terry Richardson, Assistant City Manager
Laura Webster, Senior Planner
Bret Finning, Associate Planner
Russell Hildebrand, City Attorney
Candace Johnson, Planning Commission Secretary

About 12 others

- 4. Minutes – The minutes of March 16, 2010 were approved as submitted.**
- 5. Correspondence - None**
- 6. Citizens Addressing the Commission on Non Agenda Items - None**
- 7. A moment of silence was observed honoring Brad Abbas.**

Scheduled Items:

- 8. ROCKLIN 65 SIGN PROGRAM
DESIGN REVIEW, DR-2004-17A
PERKINS, WILLIAMS & COTTERILL ARCHITECTS**

This application is a request for approval of modifications to the project entitlements to allow the office buildings in the “Professional Park” portion of the project to have more building mounted signage. No changes are proposed to the signage programs for the “Retail Plaza” (adjacent to Lonetree Blvd.) or the “Corporate Center” (adjacent to Hwy 65) portions of the project.

The subject property is generally located on the west side of Lonetree Boulevard north and west of the intersection of Lonetree Boulevard and Adams Drive. APN# 365-310-002 thru 021, & 033.



The property is zoned Planned Development Business Professional, Commercial, Light Industrial (PD-BP/C/LI). The General Plan designation is Business Professional, Commercial, Light Industrial (BP/COMM/LI).

Notice is hereby given that the City of Rocklin has adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration for this project Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), via *City Council Resolution No. 2005-108*.

The project site is not on any of the lists enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the Government Code related to hazardous waste.

The applicant is Ellis & Ellis Sign Systems. The property owner is Rocklin 65 LLC, et al.

The Commission waived the staff report.

Applicant, Michael Torres with Ellis & Ellis, addressed the Commission.

The Commission had no questions for the Applicant

The hearing was opened to the public for their comments.
There being none the hearing was closed.

Commission Deliberation/Discussion:

Commissioner Coleman concurred with staff's report and found the project consistent with the General Plan and with the economic needs of the project. He noted that the applicant has no objections so he would approve the project.

Commissioner Shirhall stated that he would also vote for the project. He stated that the project turned out excellent and in reviewing the materials and the findings of staff he could see how the additional signage would benefit the center as a whole.

Commissioner Menth stated that he approved of the project as presented by staff.

Commissioner Sully stated that she supported the project and she had no issues with the signs being added and that she concurred with the rest of the Commission and called for a motion.

On a motion by Commissioner Shirhall and seconded by Commissioner Menth, RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN APPROVING A AMENDMENT TO THE SUNSET WEST LOTS 6 & 7 (ROCKLIN 65) DESIGN REVIEW ENTITLEMENT (CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2005-110) (Sunset West Lots 6 & 7 (Rocklin 65) / DR-2004-17A) was approved by the following vote:

Roll Call Vote:

AYES:	Commissioners Shirhall, Menth, Coleman and Sully.
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	Commissioner McKenzie
ABSTAIN:	None

Motion carried: 4/0



9. RUSD TRANSPORTATION FACILITY
DESIGN REVIEW, DR-2009-05
ROCKLIN UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

This application is a request for approval of a design review entitlement to modify and update the existing Rocklin Union School District Transportation Maintenance Facility off of Sierra Meadows Drive by removing several small structures, modifying the site layout, adding a new 4,000 square foot bus shop and remodeling the existing 4,800 square foot building on the site.

The subject property is generally located off of Sierra Meadows Drive at the easterly terminus of Corp Yard Road. APN# 045-021-013.

The property is zoned Heavy Industrial (M-2). The General Plan designation is Heavy Industrial (HI).

Notice is hereby given that the City of Rocklin has identified a Categorical Exemption, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 15301 Existing Facilities and 15332 In-Fill Development, as the appropriate level of environmental review for this project.

The project site is not on any of the lists enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the Government Code related to hazardous waste.

Bret Finning presented the staff report.

The Commission had questions for staff regarding the following:

1. Proposed changes to picnic table area.
2. Lighting.

Applicant, Larry Stark, Assistant Superintendent RUSD, addressed the Commission.

The Commission had no questions for the Applicant

The hearing was opened to the public for their comments.
There being none the hearing was closed.

Commission Deliberation/Discussion:

Commissioner Sully stated that she would like to see the shoebox style lighting. She stated that she agreed with staff with respect to the substitution of tree species and she also would like to see the shade trees go into the parking area.

Commissioner Menth asked for examples of projects where shade trees were not required in parking lot.

Staff responded that there were no examples off hand where trees were not required. When the former Wal-Mart site was redesigned it had trees but they were not performing well and not as many as is now typical had been required. Staff stated that in that instance they were required to add additional trees.

Terry Richardson, Assistant City Manager, stated that he could not think of any projects off hand that were not required to have shade trees in the parking lot, however he stated that projects were not required to retrofit parking lots with shade trees if they have changes that not are subject to design review.

Commissioner Menth stated that he is sympathetic to the economic situation of the school district and he is not overly supportive of the shade trees in an existing parking lot that has been there for as many years as it has been there. He stated that he felt the school district appears very willing to meet all of the other conditions suggested and mandated by the City and he felt that if the school district was willing to comply with the down lighting, different tree species, and ground cover that he would be willing to forgo the shade tree requirement.

Commissioner Coleman stated that he concurred with Commissioner Menth. He stated that the issue he saw with the shade trees in the parking lot was that the soil is so compacted that if trees were planted they might not be able to survive. He also stated that in light of the fact that the school board is trying to find money to keep teachers employed he felt the monetary burden of the shade trees is not warranted. He supports the project as Commissioner Menth outlined.

Commissioner Shirhall stated that the project as a whole would be a nice upgrade to the facility and was glad to see it go in. He stated that he concurred with staff's findings and modifications relative to lighting and the other details as Bret outlined. He stated that if this were new construction, he would require the shade trees; however he felt at this location he would give an exemption this time.

Commissioner Sully stated that it looked like a consensus on all of the issues and called for a motion.

On a motion by Commissioner Shirhall and seconded by Commissioner Menth, RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN APPROVING A NOTICE OF EXEMPTION (Rocklin Unified School District Transportation Maintenance Facility/U-2010-01, DR-2009-05) was approved by the following vote:

Roll Call Vote:

AYES:	Commissioner Shirhall, Menth, Coleman and Sully
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	Commissioner McKenzie
ABSTAIN:	None

Motion carried: 4/0

On a motion by Commissioner Shirhall and seconded by Commissioner Menth, RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN APPROVING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (Rocklin Unified School District Transportation Maintenance Facility/U-2010-01) was approved by the following vote:

Roll Call Vote:

AYES:	Commissioner Shirhall, Menth, Coleman and Sully
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	Commissioner McKenzie
ABSTAIN:	None

Motion carried: 4/0

On a motion by Commissioner Shirhall and seconded by Commissioner Menth, RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN APPROVING A DESIGN REVIEW (Rocklin Unified School District Transportation Maintenance Facility/DR-2009-05) was approved by the following vote:

Roll Call Vote:

AYES: Commissioner Shirhall, Menth, Coleman and Sully
NOES: None
ABSENT: Commissioner McKenzie
ABSTAIN: None

Motion carried: 4/0

**10. TEMPORARY AMENDMENTS TO
THE CITY OF ROCKLIN SIGN ORDINANCE
ZOA-2009-01A**

The project proposes an extension of time for the temporary amendment to the City's sign ordinance (Rocklin Municipal Code Section 17.75) approved in March of 2009 and set to expire on June 1, 2010, that would apply to non-residential zones citywide. The amendment will extend the time a business may display certain types of temporary building and portable signs and provide a waiver for permits and fees related to temporary building and portable signs for the duration of the amendment. The project also includes a temporary amendment to the City's design review ordinance (Rocklin Municipal Code Section 17.72) that will allow staff level design review of certain permanent building signage.

It has been determined that the project is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15061(b)(3), which states that where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. A Notice of Exemption has therefore been prepared for approval.

Bret Finning presented the staff report.

The Commission had questions for staff regarding the following:

1. Quantitative data to show the program is working.
2. Requirement that signs be in good repair.
3. Potential for further relaxation of the sign ordinance.
4. Possibility of a three or six month extension.

The hearing was opened to the public for their comments.

Christine Chrisman, with the Rocklin Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Commission. She stated that some local chamber members and she met with staff during the informational meeting that was held in the Council Chambers in March. She stated that the Chamber agreed with the staff report and would like to see it extended for another year.

Commissioner Menth asked for clarification regarding what the meeting was about and whether the Chamber intended to request further changes to the sign ordinance.



Ms. Chrisman replied that the Chamber was considering developing a committee based upon the input from the business owners from the meeting in March and that that overall changes might be suggested to the sign ordinance.

Commissioner Shirhall asked for further clarification on the letter the Chamber sent to staff seeking a two year extension.

Ms. Chrisman stated that the support letter did ask for a two year extension however, the City Council stated that they would only extend for one year at the meeting of April 13, 2010.

Commissioner Shirhall asked if any of the staff members in attendance at the Planning Commission meeting had also attended the informational meeting held in March.

Staff responded that no one at the Planning Commission meeting had been in attendance at the meeting in March however it was their understanding that the primary focus of that meeting was to help educate businesses as to the scope and the intent of the existing economic stimulus sign program. Staff also related that the meeting had been successful and that there was some peripheral discussion of some potential changes but that was not the primary intent of that meeting, nor it's focus to talk about what changes may or may not be desirable for both sides but about providing the local businesses with what the current program allows and does not allow and how it is being enforced.

Commissioner Sully stated that it sounded like the information was disseminated rather late into the time frame of the effective date of the sign ordinance.

Staff stated that the way that the information was originally disseminated did not effectively communicate the parameters of the new changes. The meeting held in March gave definitive information regarding Planning aspects and Code Enforcement aspects.

Commissioner Coleman asked about any factual data to support the business owner who referenced in the letter the Chamber sent to Mayor Yuill that indicated a 32% increase in revenue for December.

Ms. Chrisman stated that she did not remember which business owner that it was but she believed it was on Pacific Street and he attributed it to the exposure of additional signage.

Commissioner Coleman asked if the other sixty people referenced in the letter had any anecdotal evidence of business increase.

Ms. Chrisman stated that the meeting was informational and some business owners were not fully aware of how to comply with the ordinance. She stated that some businesses that had misunderstandings as to how many signs they were allowed and what size. She stated that at the informational meeting, one business owner happened to state that he had an increase in business and other business owners were able to express whether they felt the temporary ordinance was a good idea or not.

Commissioner Coleman asked if there was any indication that this program worked in one section of town as opposed to another section, or if it was it city wide.

Ms. Chrisman responded that it was city wide. She stated that there is a report in their board meeting information of what the output was, which she did not have at the meeting, but that there was some documentation of the input from the informal meeting.

Commissioner Shirhall asked her to speak to some of the issues raised in the meeting regarding special event permits.

Ms. Chrisman stated that certain businesses would like to have the ability to use additional signage during specific times such as the holiday season or during the summer months.

The hearing was closed to the public.

Commissioner Coleman asked if this was approved for a year if staff planned to come before the Commission in the next six months with a new sign ordinance or additions to the current ordinance.

Commissioner Sully asked if staff planned to come back with changes to the current amendment.

Staff responded that potentially there would be changes, additions or changes to the amendment. Staff also stated there is no guarantee that staff would be supportive of changes because that discussion is just starting, but staff could be looking at changes to the economic stimulus sign package as well as to the permanent sign ordinance for the Commission's consideration. However, it is at the very preliminary stages at the moment.

Commissioner Sully asked why the sign ordinance would revert back after the economy recovered.

Staff responded that if an additional sign, such as an A-frame sign, makes a difference for a business, then it shows that there may be a need for a permanent sign. If it has truly worked to increase business the City has programs in place to have a permanent sign.

Commissioner Sully asked if a business already had everything that was allowed under the code but now has an additional A-frame or banner, why would it not continue to be allowed once the economy recovered.

Staff stated that it would not necessarily need to be allowed. The business could argue that it was the A-frame sign that increased business, however it could be argued that it was signage in general, whether it is an A-frame or a permanent sign.

Commissioner Coleman stated that if signs are better for business, then the business needs better signs.

Staff stated that if it worked for a business they should be willing to pay for a permanent sign. Staff also stated that one of the reasons that we have restrictions is aesthetics. Staff hopes that pictures could be provided of various temporary signs so the Commission could use them for a judgment call because staff would be unable to bring forth conclusive data that would prove that the business increased merely due to the sign.

Commissioner Shirhall stated that this was the point of his question, that there was no definitive data.

Commissioner Coleman stated that if the Chamber would take an active part they could go out to somebody like Ellis & Ellis and request that they create a business package for Rocklin that can be taken to the Planning Commission and the City Council to show what are the types of signs that they think will stimulate business.

Commissioner Sully stated that the Commission is considering this matter based on no information and as a Commission they are not really crazy about the temporary amendment. She stated that the Commission is being asked to increase it for another year based on no information and that a year might be too long. That it could possibly be approved for six months and in six months' time if it is something that is a priority for the businesses that they come back before the Commission at that time. Six months gives staff and the Chamber time to work on it.

Commissioner Coleman stated that if you really want business to do a better job in signage, then they cannot be given a short period of time to do it in, that they should be given at least a year to warrant that type of investment.

Commissioner Sully stated that she thought that most businesses already had the signage, and then went out and did the banners and all of the other things.

Commissioner Coleman stated that he felt that there were two different reasons for signage, identification and stimulus. He stated that what most businesses have today is purely identification, which does nothing for stimulus, which is what this ordinance is designed to do. He felt that if stimulus is the goal then better stimulus signs needed to be created.

Commission Deliberation/Discussion:

Commissioner Shirhall stated that he is sensitive to local business, but felt that the right solution to help drive business has been created. He felt that with this program that businesses would not get a permanent sign if they could have their A-frame sign, and that A-frame sign would eventually get dilapidated with time. He also stated that he had a tendency to notice the dilapidated and missing signs and gave a local example. He stated that he felt this was not the goal of the stimulus project. He stated that he sees an enforcement problem which is a resource problem and realized that resources are tight, however he felt that staff would present examples of what was working and what was not working. He stated that there is not really any data to show where it is working or whether it is working and he did not want to make a decision on someone's thought that it is working or that it does help. He agreed with Commissioner Coleman's point that if it is working so well, why don't these businesses update and put fresh new signs out to draw attention. He stated that he felt when the general public drives by a sign everyday, they stop seeing it, probably after about a week, and yet businesses in town keep putting the same sign up for twelve months at a time. He stated that if this was approved for another twelve months that sign is going to be twenty-four months old and he did not know that that would be going in the right direction. He stated that his preference would be to extend the sunset clause by six months and get a thorough review done sooner rather than later. He also stated that he would not be in favor of bypassing the Planning Commission if this was up for approval in another twelve months.

Commissioner Menth stated that he appreciated the Chamber's input but what concerned him most about the conversations is that the stimulus package is going to be a mechanism by which there could be or possibly would be wholesale or at least substantive changes in the sign ordinance that has taken so much time of this panel, staff, and the City Council. He stated that he was counting on staff's representation that that is not the case, but he felt that we are providing the knife to cut ourselves with. He stated that Commissioner Shirhall's comments hit really close to home and that there is no quantifiable evidence, and no specific examples of what's good or what's bad. He stated that he felt problem areas are Harbor Freight, Rockland Music, and Wild Danz and that it looks like a conflagration of paper fighting and that it brings no business in and it is irritating. He stated a final example as the Tokyo Tepan where a large banner is right below the very expensive sign and the only thing that catches the eye is the lanyards that are not attached and flap in the wind. He stated that he felt the intent is there to do good; the application has been woefully off target. He stated that he is not inclined to support a one year extension let alone the ability for a two year extension.

Commissioner Coleman suggested a meeting with the Chamber, the Planning Commission and the City Council and see if a plan could be devised in which everyone has some input. He stated that he concurred with Commissioner Menth and Commissioner Shirhall that he did not know if he could support a year, but he felt that he could support a continuation for six months.

Commissioner Shirhall stated that Commissioner Menth brought up a good point in recognizing that banner. He stated that according to the language, the banner should be securely fastened to the building and have a frame. He stated that he hoped that it has helped business he felt that the City is not a cleaner place today for it, and that is discouraging and disappointing from an aesthetics standpoint.

Commissioner Coleman asked if the business walk held by the Chamber of Commerce brought up anything else besides signage.

Staff replied that there were a few issues with visibility, street repairs and traffic, but mostly it was signage.

Commissioner Sully stated that she concurred with most of what the Commissioners said. She stated she supported increasing business but felt this was a slippery slope. She stated that there was a large amount of hard work put into a sign ordinance that was extremely important to the City and now if it doesn't come back in a six month time, it could bypass the Commission and the City Council could extend it another year so the Commission might not be able to have input for three years. She stated that she felt it would be really hard to go back to the original sign ordinance after three years of allowing the extra signs and banners. She concurs with the Commission regarding the six month time frame and she would like some idea that the ordinance will be enforceable. She stated that it is extremely important how the City looks and whether new businesses want to come in will depend upon how the City looks. She stated that she also feels that there needs to be a time frame and have a workshop with the Commissioners and Council and suggested it be brought back in six months and that it needs to come back to the Commission before it goes to Council.

Commissioner Shirhall stated that that is what he would support and he would like conveyed to Council that the Commission is trying to find a solution to make this program better; we're not just trying to say no, that is why we want it to come back in six months, so we can get it right.

Commissioner Menth concurred with Commissioner Sully and Commissioner Shirhall.

On a motion by Commissioner Menth and seconded by Commissioner Shirhall, RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF A NOTICE OF EXEMPTION (Economic Stimulus Temporary Sign Ordinance / ZOA-2009-01A) was approved by the following vote:

Roll Call Vote:

AYES:	Commissioner Menth, Shirhall, Coleman, and Sully
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	Commissioner McKenzie
ABSTAIN:	None

Motion carried: 4/0

On a motion by Commissioner Menth and seconded by Commissioner Shirhall, RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN EXTENDING TEMPORARY PROVISIONS TO THE ROCKLIN MUNICIPAL CODE SIGN ORDINANCE BY AMENDING SUBSECTION 17.72.020.D. IN RELATION TO STAFF REVIEW OF DESIGN REVIEW FOR PERMANENT BUILDING SIGNAGE AND SECTION 17.75.110. A. IN RELATION TO TEMPORARY AND PORTABLE SIGNS (Economic Stimulus Temporary Sign Ordinance / ZOA-2009-01A) was approved as amended by the following vote:

Section 2. The title of this Ordinance shall be the Economic Stimulus Sign Program of 2009 and shall expire on January 3, 2011 unless otherwise extended or revoked.

Section 4. Subsection 17.72.020. D.9. of the Rocklin Municipal Code shall be added to read as follows:

9. Effective Date - This subsection 17.72.020 D shall expire and be of no further force and effective on January 3, 2011.

Section 5. Subsection 17.75.110.A, Temporary Economic Stimulus Regulations, of the Rocklin Municipal Code shall be amended to read as follows:

A. Effective Date - This section shall expire and be of no further force and effective on January 3, 2011.

Roll Call Vote:

AYES: Commissioner Menth, Shirhall, Coleman, and Sully
NOES: None
ABSENT: Commissioner McKenzie
ABSTAIN: None

Motion carried: 4/0

11. Reports and Discussion Items from Planning Commissioners

- a. Grazing goats.

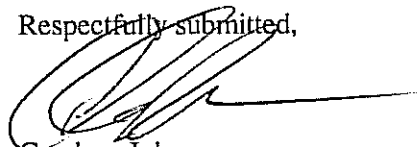
12. Reports from City Staff

- a. Blue Oaks Cinema

13. Adjournment

There being no further business brought before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Candace Johnson
Planning Commission Secretary